



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

B

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/525,050	02/18/2005	Walter Kuhn	48361	5682
1609	7590	09/26/2006	EXAMINER	
ROYLANCE, ABRAMS, BERDO & GOODMAN, L.L.P.			GALE, KELLETTE	
1300 19TH STREET, N.W.			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
SUITE 600				
WASHINGTON, DC 20036			1621	

DATE MAILED: 09/26/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/525,050	KUHN ET AL.	
	Examiner Kellette Gale	Art Unit 1621	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 February 2005.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-6 and 9 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-6 and 9 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date February 18, 2005.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Applicant recites the limitation, "nickel catalyst doped with iron and/or chromium", but later requires the catalyst to comprise both iron and chromium. Proper correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 1-6 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 1,503,723.

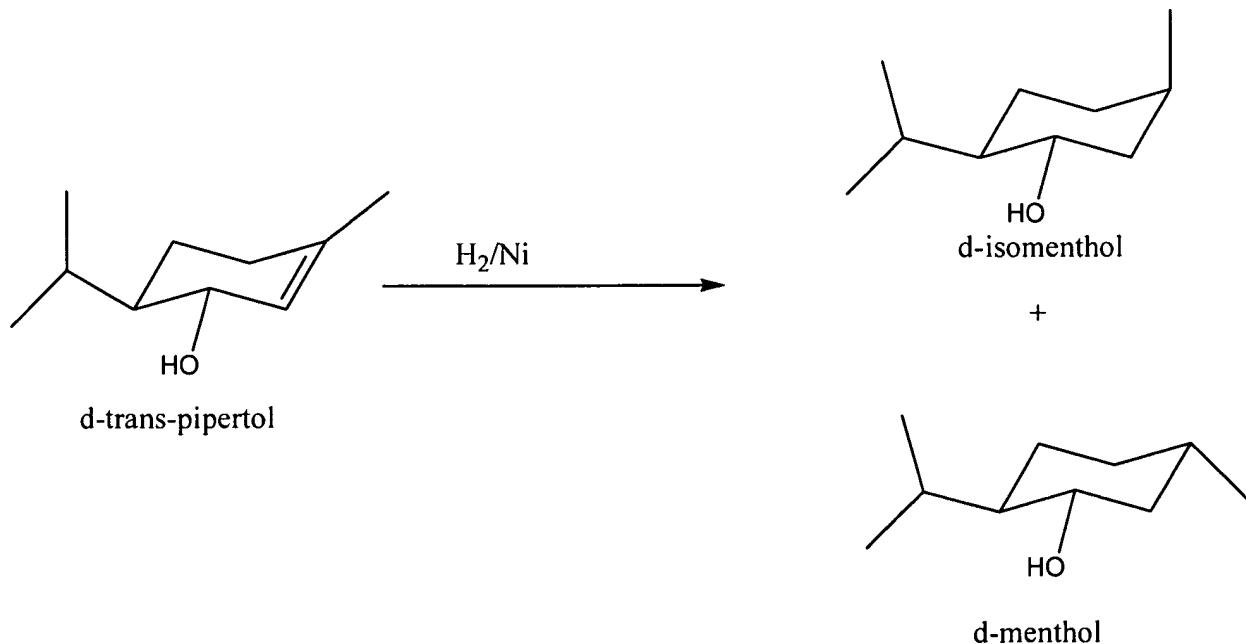
Applicant claims a method for manufacturing menthol by catalytic hydration of starting materials having the carbon network of methane with at least one double bond

and which are substituted in 3-position by oxygen and/or catalytic rearrangement of stereoisomers of the menthol in the presence of hydrogen, characterized in that the reaction is performed in the presence of a nickel catalyst doped with iron and/or chromium at a temperature in the range 80-230°C and hydrogen pressures in the range 1-200 bar abs.

Determination of the scope and content of the prior art

(MPEP §2141.01)

EP 1,503,723 teaches the following reaction scheme wherein the Nickel catalyst may comprise metal modifiers selected from $\text{AlCl}(\text{I-ProO})_2$, $\text{CrCl}_3\text{H}_2\text{O}$ or FeBr_3 :



Ascertainment of the difference between the prior art and the claims

(MPEP §2141.02)

EP 1,503,723 does not teach a catalyst that comprises nickel, chromium, iron and aluminum; therefore, does not teach catalyst concentrations as recited in the limitations.

Finding of prima facie obviousness

Rational and Motivation (MPEP §2142-2143)

It is prima facie obvious to combine individual compositions taught to have the same utility to form a new composition for the very same purpose. In re Kerkhoven, 626 F.2d 846, 205 U.S.P. Q 1069 (C.C.P.A 1980). Therefore, it would be obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the present invention to combine mixtures of the indicated metal modifiers to be incorporated with the nickel catalyst in order to prepare menthol. One of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the present invention would be motivated to do so in order to optimize process conditions to arrive at the desired product. Also, one of ordinary skill in the art would be motivated to do so due to other variables such cost and availability.

Conclusion

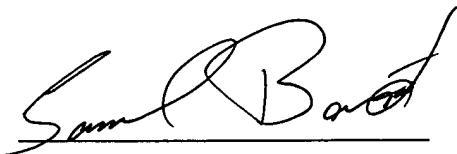
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kellette Gale whose telephone number is (571) 272-8038. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (6:30am-3:00pm).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thurman Page can be reached on (571) 272-0602. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Kellette Gale
Patent Examiner
Technology Center 1600

September 14, 2006



Samuel Barts, Ph.D.
Primary Patent Examiner
Technology Center 1600